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SUBJECT Nicholas M. Horrock On Mining Nicaraguan Harbors

FRED FISKE: With the debate raging concerning the CIA involvement in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors, with concern over terrorism mounting, and the argument over the defense budget on the front burner, we're very pleased to have at our microphones this evening Nicholas M. Horrock, who is national security correspondent for Newsweek. A veteran of the New York Times, Nick Horrock headed its Washington investigative team and directed a series on immigration which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1981. He headed the Newsweek Saigon Bureau during the Vietnam War, headed its investigative team during the Watergate period, as well.

We're very pleased to have you with us, Nick. Thanks for coming.

NICHOLAS HORROCK: Thank you very much.

FISKE: The current issue of Newsweek has an excellent story on the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors. It's titled "A Furor over the Secret War."

Has the Administration shot itself in the foot?

HORROCK: Oh, I think badly. They've probably taken two toes off, at least. Also, I think that a lot of people that I talk to in the CIA started out wondering whether it's a secret war. It is undoubtedly one of the best publicized secret wars we've had. We've had others, of course, in Laos and Africa. But this time they really seem, with an ill-conceived tactic -- and most people now look at it and wonder how it was conceived -- an

ill-conceived tactic, to really harm their support for the total attack to the Sandinistas. And it may, in a way, reflect the problem of secret decision-making.

Back when Frank Church, who died this week, as you know, when he was conducting the investigation of the CIA, one thing that was clear is that the more secret a decision was, the fewer people got involved, and therefore nobody ever debated it and said, "This could be a bad idea."

You wonder about that here. You wonder if somebody didn't say, "Gee whiz. Maybe mining is not such a good idea. It's going to alienate every maritime nation who has to service there. It may not be very effective in what we want to do. It could blow up a ferryboat full of children and be a terrible image problem." You wonder if that kind of debate...

FISKE: Joseph Kraft points out in his column today it's the sort of thing you can't keep secret.

HORROCK: Exactly. I mean it's...

FISKE: If mines are going to explode, people are going to know about it.

HORROCK: In fact, Navy people -- I spent a great deal of time, as the story unfolded a couple of weeks ago, talking privately, because they asked to be private, to Navy mining experts. And mining is basically -- I didn't know this, but it's basically a psychological weapon, even in wartime. The mines never get a lot of ships. But the idea is that you want to persuade the enemy that he can't use this, that there are mines out there, and his own fear will stop it.

So you have to, in a sense, make noise. There's no silent way to make it effective. The idea is to have the explosions come and have the port commanders, or whatever, say, "Whoops. We can't use this port anymore," to persuade them.

So, it was never secret in the way it's carried out. It couldn't be.

FISKE: One of the most troubling questions about all of this is the seeming cavalier attitude on the part of the Administration, of the CIA Director toward complying with the laws regarding congressional oversight. I mean even people like Senator Goldwater was infuriated with the fact that Casey did not level.

Was he in violation?

HORROCK: I don't know. Of course, he says he isn't. And I really hesitate there because it's a body of law that's evolving. CIA people believe that their job is to go up and make a certain report. And they -- Casey personally, and a lot of other people in the CIA, as I understand it, feel, "Look, we want general approval or disapproval. But once you approve of us taking a general action, we can't have Congress down there deciding on our tactics. That we should have the freedom to use different methodologies."

If you start from that premise, then you can see where they come to the notion, "Well, why should we talk in detail about tactic after tactic? If we're going to use this kind of gun, if we're going to use this kind of secret device."

FISKE: Some merit to that argument.

HORROCK: That seems to be their position.

The result is, as they go to the Hill, as one man I talked to privately from the CIA apparatus pointed out, they're a little like they'll go to the dentist. Everything has to be drawn out. They're not very willing patients of a committee.

So, if they knowingly went up and lied -- I doubt that'll be the final reading. I think, more likely, that they committed a crime of omission.

FISKE: They weren't forthcoming.

HORROCK: They were not forthcoming.

FISKE: Well, obviously, if you're dealing with secret information, the Congress is in no position to elicit answers. You know, it's not as though we're discussing the welfare program, about which everybody knows and everybody has opinions and can, you know, have a basis for asking questions. But if you're coming before a committee and you're talking about a planned secret activity, they have no basis for asking you. It devolves upon the CIA to be forthcoming.

HORROCK: I think that's essentially correct, except in one -- there should be sort of one caveat, from my view of covering both sides. The service on the intelligence committees is not, as you probably have been told or read, one of the most popular political things you can do on the Hill. Almost all your hearings are in secret.

FISKE: It doesn't get any press.

HORROCK: It doesn't get any press. Nobody back in Vermont, as Pat Leahy likes to point out, really cares. And it eats up a lot of your time. Most, as you know, of the senators,

and particularly in the House, are all on several committees.

So, for them to sit down and really work at this job takes away from other things that they're doing. And I think that there probably is something to be said by the fact that for that service there should be some special kind of protection for senators. Let's say they'd serve three years, they'd be relieved of some other duties, and then be able to go much harder and much more critically and dig into things.

Because when Senate committees conduct a special investigation, all of which we're very familiar with, they have time and they do dig in and they do ask questions. But no Administration is forthcoming, even in some -- I mean the Pentagon goes up all the time, it doesn't quite tell the whole story. It's job is to sell a program. So I think that something has to be said for Congress working a little harder at its job of probing and asking.

They heard the words "mining." They see things happen in the papers afterwards. They see raids with speedboats. They see raids with sophisticated aircraft. There have been helicopters. There have been A-37s. The Nicaraguans...

FISKE: Wasn't Casey asked whether Americans were involved, and he said, "No, it's being done by Latinos"? He told this to the Senate.

HORROCK: The Q&A, I've never seen. And I don't believe any of my colleagues have. So I'd like to hold back. I suspect that he didn't say it was the Contras, which was the way it was originally reported. But he did not, in any event, make it clear. And that I'm confident of.

FISKE: He said Latinos. And I suspect what he meant is that they were manning the speedboats.

HORROCK: Yeah.

FISKE: But the fact that we supplied the speedboats and supplied the mines and gave them the instructions and patted them on the heads and said, "Go," you know, he didn't make clear. He concealed.

HORROCK: And the other thing is, you know, a little attention ought to be paid for the Latinos. They are not Contras. The ones who are doing this particular segment of work are not Nicaraguan. The Contras are rather defined. They're mostly Nicaraguans ex-Somozistas, Guardsmen from the Somoza era, some others who report to Adolf Calero and Eden Pastora. But the men on these boats, as I understand it, are El Salvadorians,

military men. They're trained. Some of them are Argentines. There are allegedly some Chileans. These are professional, very tough, very well-trained commandos who work for money. They're not there trying to retake -- and they may also have emotional commitment. But it's my understanding they're professional commandos. Because the three or four raids, particular the one that's broke in the past couple of days, which blew up the oil refinery and capacity, were highly sophisticated jobs, much more so than what has been the general ability of the Contras to perform.

FISKE: What's the sum total effect of this going to be? We've been criticized by our closest allies. We've been embarrassed before the world. The Congress, where there was already some considerable opposition to providing funds to continue the covert activities, even over funds for El Salvador -- and the entire operation relates to the war in El Salvador --what is the sum total effect of this going to be?

HORROCK: In the long run, of the covert war? Or the mining difficulties?

FISKE: The mining incident as it affects the covert war, and, in fact, our aid to El Salvador.

HORROCK: Oh, I think it's cost us twice what it has gotten, because I think it has done exactly -- it has further weakened the support for -- domestically in Congress, which is where a good deal of this battle is fought -- for the general support in El Salvador and against the Sandinista government. So the mining alone was terribly ill-conceived, from that standpoint.

But the second thing that's bothersome to us out in the world, down in Central America, is that it further defines our position in a kind of inter -- unacceptable international plot, where we have the nations that we would hope would later negotiate this, the Contadora and the Mexican government, are clearly against this. We have taken actions which endanger their own shipping, which endanger the region, and I think really put us in a very difficult diplomatic position.

And I'm not entirely sure this is a particularly partisan statement I'm making. It's not a Democrats -- I think a great many Republicans I've interviewed feel the same thing, that -- in fact, the whole covert war, when it's looked at in history five years from now, may not have been at all the way to go to getting a favorable settlement in Central America. It's been pushed by the Reagan Administration. It first was to interdict the arms, which they then admitted they couldn't do. It never could have done that. That was never possible. The arms shipment are a trickle and they run through jungles and seas.

So, really, it's a [unintelligible] to destabilize the Nicaraguan government, and that hasn't worked. They've been at it 18 months, and they haven't budged them.

FISKE: Some critics of the Administration argue that, in fact, the Salvadoran rebels are armed largely with weaponry which they capture from the Salvadorans to whom we provide these weapons; and that, in fact, a very large portion of their armaments are sold to them by Salvadoran soldiers.

Do you have any way of knowing how true that is?

HORROCK: Well, a good deal of it is true because, grudgingly and in rather confused figures, Dr. Fred Ikle, who's one of the key architects of our Central American policy in the Pentagon, testified in public session -- I think it was about two and a half weeks ago -- that 50 percent of the arms in the hands of the guerrillas come from military forces.

And remember, arms don't get lost every day. So that that's really -- that means a substantial amount of their armament accumulated has come from the government, and that the government loses routinely ten percent of the arms we give them. Now, that is a substantial number of arms. That's, in fact, a bigger figure than what the guerrillas seem to be getting.

So that between that and purchases -- which are ill-defined. We don't know that. And purchases being in third countries, and not necessarily communist weapons -- it's clear that the Nicaraguan route is not crucial to the El Salvadorian advances.

What both sides agree, though, is the ammunition, what they call consumables, expendables, are the military terms, every day's ammunition, that is what Nicaragua does supply. That is harder for the guerrillas to get from the government, because you've got to get it the day you're running out. It has to be a steady stream. And that is what the Adminitration says, or hopes, that the Sandinista attacks would reduce, that pressure.

The fact is, though, that 80 percent of the ammunition that they get comes from Nicaragua, according to the government. And that hasn't been reduced in 18 months of effort.

FISKE: What's your view, what do you learn about the fighting in El Salvador itself? I mean a lot of people have a very uneasy feeling that we're following a pattern similar to the pattern of Vietnam, that we keep stepping up the help and the aid and the assistance and the personnel, and that in spite of the training of the Salvadoran forces and the assurances that we receive periodically from our own leaders that they're well-trained and able to do the job, the reports from the field

indicate that they're not scoring any great successes.

Do you feel that we are being sucked into quicksand?

HORROCK: A lot of the correspondents back away from the answer who've been there. Ray Bonner on the New York Times, Rob Brevard, our man in El Salvador, Lydia Chavez, I think, have come to that conclusion as they spent time there.

If you look at El Salvador, though, that morass is not very deep. It's a very tiny country.

The general morass of Central America would be as devastating to us as Vietnam. You're talking about four countries, an enormous number of people. We'd lose an army trying to go in there and deal with it.

The Administration gives you a rather positive little figure, and you can't ignore it. Even though the El Salvadorian army hasn't beaten the guerrillas, the guerrillas haven't beaten the El Salvadorian army. So that we've kind of maintained with our assistance a status quo.

But from everything I read and from talking to the people that I deal on this end at the Pentagon and State Department, the ones I think are objective, at least, there has to be some fundamental correction in the El Salvadorian government and correction in the economics of that country. And without that -- it's not a question of just training the El Salvadorian army and us sending an unlimited amount of arms. That will never work. I mean there are just -- the human rights issues. There are basic issues of life, and in that country, which so erode the power of the people we support, that until those are corrected, there's sort of an endless guerrilla war before us. And it can't be beaten by the classical military method.

FISKE: This is an election year. It would be very debilitating to the Reagan reelection effort for him to pull out of El Salvador or Nicaragua. The Congress left town without appropriating the money. The President managed to find it from a special fund.

Do you see that if in fact the Congress digs its heels in on Nicaragua, or even El Salvador, that the Reagan Administration will not find some way to go forward, that the Reagan Administration, particularly in an election year, might take some extreme measure to try to administer a final coup, to score a great victory?

HORROCK: I don't see them trying to score a victory. I

think that would be terribly risky. I mean these are rational government officials, by whatever terms a rational one chooses. So I don't think -- because of the chances of losing.

And I also -- every indication we had when we finished our work and our reporting last week, as Congress got ready to leave, is that the recess favors, slowly but surely, the Administration, in that in the long run, no matter what the rhetoric you hear, they will fund the basic Nicaraguan covert campaign and they'll fund the El Salvadorian campaign at the amounts that the Administration wants; and that what will be lost will be they're going to bar mining. There won't be any more mining.

But basically, Congress is afraid of being accused of losing Central America. And that's a strong political -- I mean it's an election year for many of them, too. So they don't want to be in the position of going out in October, having two or three of these countries collapse, and explaining why they didn't do anything.

By the same token, I would doubt that the President would make an unusually aggressive move. I think he'd like to downplay Central America, keep a good status quo, not lose anything, get himself through his conventions and through the election. If reelected, he might take very aggressive actions.

You have a sense when you talk to people like Ambassador Kirkpatrick, Bill Casey, and others that they fervently believe, right or wrong, that they'd like to be known as the Administration that maybe reversed communist growth in the Western Hemisphere, even reversed the Cuban government. I mean you just feel that that's a commitment, emotionally, many of them have made.

FISKE: Do you see any lasting effect, any serious effect of our refusal to accept the jurisdiction of the World Court in this matter with Nicaragua?

HORROCK: I gather that there's no legal impact. But remember, we still do have, or we think we have an image, most Americans thing we have an image in the world. And when we do some things like that that are transparently self-serving, and so forth, we just erode that. We erode -- we're the leader of the Free World, is what the image we project. And that was an act of a nation that squibbles and sleazes and so forth. And I'm not saying that it isn't in our national interest to do so, maybe. But again, somebody didn't sit down and think out its long-term -- I think it does erode our image in nations where our image is important. And that's Western Europe, certain parts of Asia, countries where we still have a chance of persuading them of our leadership.

FISKE: Since you deal with the problem of terrorism and intelligence, let's talk for a little while, if we can, about the difficulties with Libya and England. What do you make of all of that, make of the remarks of Qaddafi today at the press conference when, you know, he outraged the entire world by blaming the British for the shooting at their embassy? You know, we're living in the world of television, and hundreds of millions of people, I presume, actually saw that take place.

What will result from this? What will flow from it?

HORROCK: I don't know. I think it's a stymie. I don't think that we know how -- the "we" being the Western World --know how to handle a really crazy or a person operating out of the responsible theme of government: Qaddafi, Idi Amin, who was quite a different matter. It's really preposterous.

Down through history, we've had nations and leadership like this. But now, as you point out, on television, their view, their attitude and the preposterous nature projected all around the world just like that. How do you deal with them?

You noticed earlier in the week that the President gave the military permission, in a well-publicized order, to take preventive action, if you will, if they found out that a terrorist act was about to be fomented by a foreign government. But what does that really mean? I think it's ridiculous. We aren't going to invade Qaddafi. Are we really going to mount an invasion because we find out that Libya, before it does it, is going to take a major terrorist act somewhere? I don't think it's realistic. I think we did it as a threat. I don't think it was a well thought-out threat.

But nevertheless, I really -- as you talk to people in government, this may be one of the most serious things, that governments are learning to move or changing the way they deal with one another, in fighting and undercurrent, through this terrorist method. It's not the first time in history, but it's at its peak right now, this government-supported terrorism, where I project my moves through nameless third parties. So that it's very hard for the defensive government, ours, the British, and so forth, to resist. How do they fight back? Do we go bomb seven Libyan villages? And it's been a quandary in each one of these incidents. Who do we attack for the Marine battalion headquarters?

Well, it was easy when a gunboat -- if a French gunboat had shelled the American positions, you go sink the French gunboat. But it really has them. And you can tell our government is really wrestling with this. It's a terribly difficult problem.

So, I don't know what's going to flow. You can see that one thing, at least, in the Western -- that Libya is further isolating itself. There are some economic sanctions that can be taken against it. But nevertheless, I mean how -- I haven't seen one idea...

FISKE: I suppose the economic sanctions would have to be taken by the other Western nations. We have very little to do with Libya, economically.

HORROCK: Certainly. And they also have some economic powers of their own to Western Europe, which uses oil from they and some of their colleagues in the Mideast. They have to be cautious.

FISKE: But again, the irrationality of Muammar Qaddafi has been demonstrated. A great many people, I included, live in dread of the day that an atomic weapon may come into the hands of Qaddafi and Libya, because I have no doubt that he's capable of insane actions. This must be a source of enormous worry to intelligence and to the Administration.

Is there any possible thing that can be done about it?

HORROCK: Well, they do do some things. I mean, naturally, they try to trace the proliferation of certain kinds of weapons, not only nuclear. That's one of the reasons that Cap Weinberger and others are really concerned. One of the most major concerns in the Pentagon has been the Iran-Iraq war, because there, into two governments which don't have certain standards, have become used some very sophisticated chemical weapons.

Take again Qaddafi. Anybody can produce nerve gas with a certain amount -- it's not a very -- what are the powers in Qaddafi's hands with a substantial amount of nerve gas to be used in a terrorist fashion, not in general warfare? It's terribly frightening. Nerve gas in a downtown urbanized area like London would be a devastating attack. So that is an enormous concern.

The only thing that they've really done is to really smooth up and improve the intelligence relationship between Western Europe nations and the United States, which was a significant step. Everybody wasn't taking this seriously ten years ago or 12 years ago at Munich. And now, at least the Western nations are of one mind.

There's also some subtle suggestion -- and there's a lot of debate about this -- that maybe the Eastern nations, Soviets and so forth, do not, themselves, want to see terrorism go completely unregulated. They can be victims as well, even though their governments are better protected than we are.

FISKE: What course of action remains open to us if intelligence should report that the Libyans have indeed a nuclear weapon?

HORROCK: I could see -- in a nuclear weapon, I could see a very clear discussion emerging between Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Germany, and the French, maybe, depending on what combination, saying let's go in with parachutists, or whatever, some kind of swift attack, very much as the Israelis on Iraq at that point when they saw that plant being developed beyond a point they thought was possible, and take it out. Better to take it out and risk some of the other things than to let him have it. I mean this is a risk assessment you have to make.

FISKE: But the Israelis were criticized harshly for that action.

HORROCK: But the fact is they took it out.

FISKE: But you're saying that we, in that position, would have no alternative but to do the same thing?

HORROCK: Do the same thing. You can stand a lot of criticism. It doesn't look so nice if you're missing New York. So I mean it really is -- and I think that's the way the Israelis feel about it.

FISKE: Now, you mentioned the Iran-Iraq war. Very worrisome. I saw an interview with CIA Director Casey the other day. He expressed the view that the Iranians have some advantage in their greater numbers and weaponry. What happens if Iran should prevail in that war?

HORROCK: The oil people say it's very serious, not as directly serious for us as it is for Western Europe, because it means that a very conservative element of Muslims, all the way from Syria, stretching down through Iran, this kind of an arc, would have enormous powers over oil supply, and also over nations who do not believe, like Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and so forth. If you look at a map, you can see the enormous influence of these powerful, highly dense countries if that were to be formed. And so that is a serious concern. Because even though we now have reduced our needs in Mideast oil, we also are part of an agreement where we pass oil on to other nations if they fall short.

So, from an oil standpoint, energy standpoint, that is regarded as very serious. And that's the reason that the French and the others are covertly, as far as we can determine, shipping arms and balance -- trying to hold the balance in the war.

FISKE: Are you saying, Nick, that we can't allow Iraq to lose that war?

HORROCK: Effectively. Yeah. I think that's what --when we say, "What do we do?" Overtly, I don't know. I think it would be very -- we're sitting on the edge of the Soviet Union. Are we going to commit divisions to battling that? That's ridiculous. We can take certain steps to keep the Straits of Hormuz open.

But from the standpoint of helping the Iraqis, I think that we would -- again, this would be covert multination Western action. Western including Japan. They're a very big player in this.

FISKE: ...the very real potential of triggering World War II, doesn't it?

HORROCK: I think the whole Mideast situation does hold that. I've asked often the question to people at the Pentagon: What do you think -- where do you think World War II -- because we think of a concept coming over Europe. Most of them don't agree. It's a situation like the Mideast, where it's so close, the Soviets are all involved, we're all mixed up, and we're suddenly facing each other. And, yeah, I think that's dangerous.

FISKE: ...We're talking to Nichola M. Horrock, who is national security correspondent for Newsweek....

Good evening.

MAN: ...First of all, I would like to say I really like what you said about Central America, as one who has been down there. Have you been down there?

HORROCK: No, sir.

MAN: Well, it sounded like you were, unless you talked to reporters who had been down there for a long time. I think what you said was really right on.

But I wanted to ask a question about this question of atomic terrorism. Have you ever heard of the idea of covertly implanting nuclear weapons, I mean the Soviet Union doing that in the United States or the United States doing that in the Soviet Union?

HORROCK: I've never heard an authoritative report of that -- that you can hand-carry nuclear weapons [sic]. We can miniaturize them today so they can fit in small boats, planes, or vans, and take them into the host country, and they would explode with zero delivery time.

And I don't see why it just has to be the Libyans who are doing this. I mean, after all, the United States is the one who is producing tens of thousands of new nuclear weapons, you know, every five years, or whatever. So I'm a little bit more worried about what the CIA -- I mean if they've got terrorists down in Nicaragua -- I mean we knew about these Contras when they were training in Miami. Okay? That was like three years ago. Remember that?

HORROCK: I certainly do.

MAN: Okay. These guys aren't indigenous guerrillas, like in El Salvador. These people are paid in dollars, and then they spread it all around Honduras, and it helps the economy there and the military there.

HORROCK: Some Contras are paid. We have to grant them the fact, again, relying on what I think are our reporters there for Newsweek and others that are independent, that some of them are indigenous and paid in the sense only of supporting their families while they fight.

MAN: Well, then if they get the money cut off, they should be able to continue their just struggle and they should be capturing areas of Nicaragua, which they have not yet done. I mean they captured the city for a couple of days, and not they've already lost it. They have not even tried to occupy any area. All they're doing is economic sabotage of the oil facilities, the ports, bombing the civilian airport with a plane that was registered in McLean, Virginia, for crying out loud.

Is this terrorism by the United States Government that we are paying for? And you're telling me, everybody's talking to me about some Libyan crackpots in London? What about the crackpots in Washington, D.C.?

FISKE: Thank you.

Good evening.

MAN: ...I just got through looking at Alexander Haig on 20/20, and it was really shocking. No, it wasn't shocking to me 'cause I've been following this right along. But it was nice, in a way, to hear someone come out that was an insider and who's a hawk really say how amateur the Reagan Administration is. And the people behind him are just like throwing darts at a board. They just decide, "Hey, let's try this. Let's try this."

And I think the gentleman you have there is right on target, of course. He knows what he's talking about.

I think we made a terrible mistake by not going to the International Court. I think we're just giving the terrorists -- which I'm a liberal, basically. But everyone has to admit that this is a real problem. And I think that we're playing right into their hands.

What do you think about that?

HORROCK: Well, I think that one of the things that you're putting your hand on is the fact that one of the resistances to terrorism is to be scrupulous in the rule of law. I mean the anarchy, the resistance to anarchy is to have order. So when we disregard a World Court or when we use covert means that is close to something as it appears to be terrorism, that we have to think about how much that dissolves order among what we would like to call the civilized nations.

And so there is a point you're making there. We do change our image drastically and undermine ourselves.

FISKE: Do you agree the whole thing was poorly handled, the mining thing?

HORROCK: Yes. Personally, I think it was. And I've talked to -- but even then, I'm no expert on mining or covert action. But I've certainly talked to a lot of men, some of whom can't be named, who are professional, who've been involved with the CIA for a long time as senior officers, as well as covert operators. And it's a very amateurish effort.

FISKE: Did you read Joe Kraft this morning?

HORROCK: Yes, I did, as a matter of fact.

MAN: What do you think Mr. Reagan -- how do you think the Chinese will handle him, as far as -- he thinks he's going there, you know, to use them politically, or whatever. What do you think they'll try to get? I mean I think they realize the power they have, you know, the U.S. trying to use them against the Russians and everything. What do you think they'll do?

FISKE: Any ideas?

HORROCK: Well, as you've probably seen reported, there are not real clear targets from the trip, the way some of our trips are, so you won't get a laundry list afterwards. But anybody who looks at the map of the world knows that we're trying to nurture a balance which involves having the Chinese at least an independent third force, if not an ally of ours in the world balance of power. And that's what he's there to cement.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: Help me out on Central America. I understand that these were acoustical mines.

HORROCK: Well, you know, there's a lot of debate about that. And my first information, which I filed in the magazine, and I believe came from solid sourcing, was that there were acoustical mines. Every Navy expert I've talked to said, "Why would they use acoustical mines? They're particularly difficult. Why not magnetic?"

Then, subsequently, I've seen two other reports. I have not been able to confirm that they are magnetic. I now have it suggested to me, just this week, that there were probably two kinds used by the agency-supported activity. And incidentally, there was a third and cruder type of mine placed by actual Contras in a separate set of events.

The mines -- the magnetic -- and I take it from your call that you have a good sense of the difference -- everybody, across the board, who has done a lot of minging say magnetic would have been much better for what they understood the harbors and approaches would be.

MAN: Well, I really can't claim to know much about mines. But I had thought that acoustical mines wouldn't sink any ships. They might scare the heck out of people.

HORROCK: No. That's just a question of the amount of charge. An acoustical mine goes off because it listen to a motor; and at a certain point when the motor becomes so loud, it triggers its mechanism. A magnetic mine goes off because a ship creates a magnetic field when it moves through the water, and at a certain point the magnetic field becomes so rich and full that it detonates the mine. So that's just the detonation devices. And the way the Navy and others select the use depends on the bottom, the type of vessels they're going after, and so forth. But the charge can be as enormous as you want it.

Big Navy mines -- one thing that was interesting about this, and it shows how few people in the Senate understood, as I didn't, the sophistication of these techniques -- to kill a ship, as the Navy guys call it, takes a big mine, to kill a big vessel. You're talking about a mine that has to be lowered by a derrick. It's about 500-1000 pounds. That's an average-sized naval mine.

So, when you had a little fast-moving boat with some guys dumping it off the back who had to do it quickly under surveillance, you were right away limiting it to a mine that wouldn't automatically sink a ship. That doesn't mean they

aren't dangerous. They're going to blow a hole in a ship. But...

FISKE: As a matter of fact, they damaged six Nicaraguan vessels and six vessels belonging to five other countries, and seriously injured ten sailors.

HORROCK: So they were dangerous. And they could have resulted in a ship sinking as a result of its bad manufacture or something wrong with its beams.

But bigger mines actually crumple the ship, break it in half, as the ultimate goal of a big naval mine. And the size of the charge, as I understand it, determines largely how successful it's going to be, rather than the listening devices.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I've often wondered whether or not a war like the one in El Salvador couldn't be fought on a cost-benefit basis, if that doesn't tickle you. And here's my approach. It seems that the population of El Salvador is not much greater than Maryland, I think about three million people. Is that about right?

HORROCK: That's correct.

MAN: And we have spent somewhere in the neighborhood of about $3 billion down in that neighborhood, which totes up to about a year's pay for each citizen down there. I'm wondering if you had a scheme to pay this money out, maybe on a monthly basis, and sent down a systematized economic scheme, whether or not you wouldn't be better off trying to buy the peace rather than trying to fight for it.

HORROCK: I don't think what you say is at all ridiculous. I, personally, have often -- and this is totally personal. I mean nothing to do with my news assignment. I really think that you may be on to something.

There are some problems, and I've chatted that up with guys who've studied, particularly, El Salvador. One of the problems in El Salvador is that certain people want more of the country than the others have. And so they would want a bigger share. And since they control the business and so forth, and some of them are supporters of that radical right, naturally they'd try to get an unfair share. So it might not be easy to effect.

But if often questions you, when we pour -- I always used to feel this when I was in Vietnam. I'm watching pouring all thise expensive metal we shipped over there down the country,

we could have literally set up an annuity for everybody there at the same price.

We never seem to be able to work that out in world affairs. I don't know how to do it.

MAN: Well, one of the ways you could do it is in a method that I've preached for years called packet economics, in which you'd look at the country as a study and set up an economic system. And so far as the big boys are concerned down there that want to get an unfair share, if you come in with the muscle, why can't you control the scene?

HORROCK: We're traveling a lot of simplifications. One of the things that I think may be that our approach -- we don't have a uniform approach in this country. There's a lot of dispute. There is resistance to -- for instance, the Kissinger Commission talks about enormous commitment of American aid as one of their fundamental ways to deal with Central American problem. But then we say we aren't going to produce that aid until we create an atmosphere of peace and stability, and that is a justification for our increased military aid, so an organized government can do so.

So we have this kind of a chicken-and-an-egg desire. How do we create the atmosphere in which we then can in a rational way sit down, as you say, bring our muscle in, if you will, support the right forces?

There's also dispute, legitimate dispute, about who should be on top in El Salvador. Duarte seems to be the candidate that Americans find most favorable. But nevertheless, I mean, they are human beings. And when you spend time, as I have, in a country -- we thought President Thieu was our best candidate, but there were many people in Vietnam who thought he was incredibly corrupt and incredibly bad.

FISKE: And we changed our minds too.

HORROCK: And we changed our minds too. Exactly.

MAN: Isn't it true that of the aid we're sending presently, a lot of it is being siphoned off by people who are on our so-called side?

HORROCK: Yes. Absolutely. They're investing it. In fact, we did a story, and other people have been working hard on that. There's some investigations by our government. Some of the money is invested right badk here on their behalf in Miami.

I think, really, you're talking about something a little bit more fundamental which we really have to do if we're going to

continue in the world, and that is to work out -- and it has little to do with partisan politics -- work out a better way to understand how we're going to operate in the Third World, what combinations, how we make decisions about who to help and who not to help.

There's also a notion that Gary Hart's raising, but a lot of people believe. We make an evaluation of all of our people operating these countries on the basis of whether they're communist or non-communist. And we're against what we think our communist-supported revolutions. But the fact is, many of the revolutions would exist whether communists -- and they just happen to be willing to support them. And we've got to make that separation.

Everybody seems to agree on that except certain elements of the present Administration. You have to step back. There are legitimate revolutionary tendencies in El Salvador. There were in Nicaragua. And to find, identify these and support these groups -- I don't know why -- is it written someplace that the Soviet Union is the only people who support poor people's revolutions? That's ridiculous.

MAN: Certainly not Republicans.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I want to bring up both a practical point on foreign policy and also a philosophical one. And considering that our country has such an excellent strategic position in the world, in that our wealth, despite our recession problems, and also that we are not close to belligerents, except maybe for Cuba, you know, that are right next door to us; and yet with all this, including our big population and all, we're incredibly ignorant about he rest of the world. Despite the fact that Americans are the number one in foreign travel, and all, that apparently 80 percent of us can speak no foreign language, very few of us have ever lived in a foreign country. And I include in this those who have been President of the United States. And people will often be embarrassed among foreigners particularly Spanish-speaking people, say, "Gee, you know. I feel embarrassed. I don't know your language." And one of these foreigners should say, "Well, haven't you -- hasn't Spanish been offered in your schools?"

And where I live, I live in a neighborhood with a lot of Asians and Latin Americans. And, of course, a lot of Americans say,"Well, we don't like all these foreigners coming in here." And it just seems to me -- I know that in the rest of the world there are many of these similar attitudes. But here we are, a big influence in the world, whether we like it or not, and we are

incredibly ignorant of what's going on. And so are a lot of our leaders.

FISKE: Okay. No quarrel with that.

Nick, what about William Casey, the CIA Director? The President is supporting him. There's a tremendous amount of opposition to him on the Hill, in the media. He's been criticized on a whole variety of counts, not the least of which is his own personal finances. Senator Sasser described him as arrogant and confused and unknowing. Is he going to hang on?

HORROCK: Well, I think that, actually, many people, privately, in the Administration felt he was going to leave before this happened, not under any duress, but because he had, in the times I've talked to him, seemed to have a clear idea of some objectives in taking that job, personal objectives, and that he didn't want it endlessly. He's had a very interesting career. Whatever the criticisms are, Bill Casey is not stupid. That is one of the most misleading -- every once in a while I read somebody say that, and I don't think they've thought about it very hard.

Now the President's got a problem, and so does Bill Casey, a little like Meese. If he were to leave now, for whatever reason, it would be a retreat. And I don't think that they want to signal that to the general electorate. So I think he has sort of job security.

There may come a time when he could say, "Listen, I think I'm an impediment to the President's foreign policy. I personally am, for whatever reason. Senators don't have faith in me. And I think I'll leave." I think Bill Casey, from what I've been told about him, is the kind of man who would do that.

But right now, I don't think they want to give that sign of surrender. And I think that means he's going to be here through the election.

FISKE: What's happened to the CIA? We went through a period in which the CIA was regarded very, very highly by the American people, almost like the FBI was for many, many years. And then, following the revelations that came out during the Church Committee hearings and other revelations, the CIA suffered a great tumble in the public perception. It was revised and done over. Stansfield Turner fired a great many people. The Congress passed laws and resolutions and safeguards of various sorts. And it seemed to me that in the last few years the CIA's image had been resurrected, refurbished somewhat.

Is it now suffering again?

HORROCK: I think so. I think that was, to me, was the most -- from the CIA perspective, the most dangerous thing that happened in this past two- or three-week period. The CIA has had a lot of problems since the famous Church thing. They didn't know about the Shah's fall in Iran. Some other things have not gone well. But basically, they seem to be on a contin --restoring their professionalism. Their recruiting had gone up. They're very proud of their recruiting figures. They've done a lot to buoy morale out there.

What it seemed to me that Bill Casey lost in this mining adventure was the support of the professional -- of some people in the professional intelligence community who felt that this so put back the notion of their unrestricted terrorism kind of activities that it harmed this image. And that's a serious change. And I think they feel that. I think a lot of professionals feel.

They also -- like it or dislike it, even though they lied or didn't lie to Congress, the fact is the perception is they lied to Congress. I mean look at the editorials. Look at what everybody says. And that's difficult because they had overcome that notion. They were not the automatic liars they had once been conceived of.

So I think that's serious, in an image way. And I think that they would have to sit down now and do some rebuilding again.

FISKE: It's unfortunate, because the road back, the resurrection of the CIA, if you will, you know, it was a long painful process.

Good evening.

MAN: I'd like to ask your guest this question. Don't you think politics should be kept out of the CIA, and promotions such as what Casey has been doing would be eliminated, and promotions should be done within by the qualifications of the people, and not any political concern done?

HORROCK: You mean his appointment as -- since he'd been campaign manager for Ronald Reagan?

MAN: That's right. That's correct.

HORROCK: Well, that's been a big debate. There's another side to that, and let me just give it to you for a second, for whatever you see it's worth.

The President's -- Dick Helms, for instance, was a

professional CIA employee who rose to the Directorship.

MAN: Yeah, I worked for him.

HORROCK: You did?

MAN: Yes.

HORROCK: Well, there have been people, then, as you know, who suggested that the President needed to have total personal confidence in the Director, and that it should be somebody that he chose that he really knew. So that, therefore, because he could not be lied to by the Director of CIA.

So that leaves the question, then, do you -- that to find that kind of person, you have to pick somebody, sometimes, who's a political partisan.

The idea, as you know, then, since you worked out there, or may have worked for Dick Helms, they would always try to offset that by the Deputy, by making him a professional to balance out.

My personal instincts would be that it should be very much like the FBI, something like a ten-year civil service appointment taken out and make it a service agency. Even though it has a lot to do with our foreign policy, the fact of the matter is I think that it would be more comfortable a professional agency. But that's a personal opinion. It's a major debate.

MAN: Well, I agree with you on that subject.

FISKE: Thank you, sir.

Good evening.

MAN: Have a question for you, and to try to boil it down as simply as possible. One thing that has always amazed me, and I've never fully understood it, it seems that as far as foreign policy, the Soviet Union will go into a country, a Third World country, and they go right to the heartland. They go in with tractors and agricultural equipment and they try to help the people, they try to help the masses. Whereas the United States -- and pardon me if I'm being overly simplistic in what appears to be my observation -- it seems like we totally bypass the people of the country and go straight tot he top and go right to the despot and pump millions into this individual's pocket, where most of it stays there.

I think an example, we did this with Batista, we did it

with other individuals in Central America. The Shah of Iran, I think, is an excellent example of what I'm referencing as to my observation. And when the Shah finally collapsed, the people of Iran despised us, frankly, I think justifiably, because we hadn't done a damn thing for them. Everything we had done had been for the specific despot right at the top.

And I'd be interested to know whether you -- hear your comment as to how correct you think my observation may be. And if so, why.

HORROCK: I think that from the end result, you're obviously correct. We supported Batista and he was not an attractive figure. We've supported Pinochet in Chile. He's not an attractive figure. The Shah. They are despots by anybody's terms.

But on the other hand, we're in a practical problem in many countries. Number one, we got there first and we dealt with organized government, did trade. For instance, the Soviets had almost no trade or influence in Central America. So that they had to approach second, and the established government was not going to do business because that was already ours. They had to look, by their nature -- put aside whether they're proletarian. They had to look for the outs, because that's who they could do business with.

The second thing is, they move throughout the world in terms of labor and other groups, and that's how they end up on the bottom, if you will.

FISKE: Our time has run out. I want to thank you so much for coming....